

## Extravagance of French at Panama

"Nothing remains but to say, 'Well done.' The canal will be built," said President Roosevelt concerning the Panama canal, which the United States has undertaken to complete. This it seems that we have reached the last stage of one of the greatest engineering enterprises in human history, and one the story of which, though much of it is now forgotten, is about the most remarkable ever told of any undertaking.

A quarter of a century has gone since this gigantic task of cutting a waterway through the isthmus which connects North and South America was first begun. De Lesseps' engineering commission estimated its cost at \$43,000,000 francs. De Lesseps himself placed the figure at \$100,000,000 francs (\$120,000,000) and began the stupendous work with the lightest and most confident of hearts. Less than eight years later his company was bankrupt, with \$200,000,000 of debts, and only a quarter of the work was completed.

### Greatest of Fiascos.

Probably never was a greater fiasco brought about by such reckless extravagance. "I had no idea," wrote an engineer who visited Panama a few years after the company's collapse, "until I went and saw for myself what reckless, fabulous extravagance there was on the isthmus from 1881 to 1889. The sum of \$265,000,000 was spent in building about one-fourth of the Panama canal. Competent engineers say that the same work, barring the accidents from the rising of the Chagres river, could be done today for about \$25,000,000. To be exact, the De Lesseps company spent about \$250,000,000 and excavated less than 70,000,000 cubic yards of earth and gravel.

"The Californians talk about the palmy days when extravagance was the rule in San Francisco and at Virginia City, but these were not comparable with the days in 1883 and 1884 when men made 1,000,000 francs profit a month at Panama and Colon. I met one man there who had sold mules and donkeys to the Panama Canal Company in 1882 and made \$300,000 clear between June and September on an invested capital of \$20,000. He told me of a man from New Orleans who brought down a stock of rubber boots (necessary in working in the swamps and streams) worth about \$5,000, and who sold the whole lot to a contractor for the canal company for \$50,000 cash down."

### Prodigality and Vice.

Strange tales, too, are told of high salaried officials who gave grand balls at which champagne was drunk by the gobletful and men and women amused themselves by throwing handfuls of gold and silver coin out of the windows to see the natives fight and scramble on the ground for it. They tell of the orchestra of 20 Parisian musicians that was kept at Colon for three years at large expense, solely to furnish music for the canal officials and their friends on an evening.

They tell, too, of the equipages of the canal company at Colon in those days and of the women and men who played night after night baccarat with one hand and roulette with the other. These are but samples of the prodigal wasting of money by the company which undertook to construct the canal and whose failure brought ruin to tens of thousands of investors in France and equally remarkable is the description of the state of things after work had ceased.

### Costly Machinery Left to Rot.

Machinery and apparatus that had cost millions of dollars were left to rot in the swamp and forests. There were hundreds of dredges brought from France and Belgium at a cost of \$3,000 each, enormous steam cranes from Birmingham worth \$1,000 apiece, wagons, thousands of steel rails, beams of railway tools and steel cables—all abandoned and buried in dirt and rust. Machinery which had cost \$7,000,000 was strewn along the line of the canal for a distance of about 40 miles.

Ten steam pumps and reservoirs, which had cost not less than \$10,000 were lying in a heap just as they had been dumped from the cars, the crating not even having been removed, while at a place near Almarilla, 11 miles from Panama, there was a pile of rusted nails which had never been used, which could not have been bought under \$10,000.

### Train Sank in the Mud.

Rustling in the mud were 120 locomotives—English, French, Belgian and American; at the canal's mouth a dozen large tugboats were lying rotten and useless, while on a grass-grown, decaying spur of the construction railroad, a few miles southwest of the Culabra cut, were a Philadelphia locomotive and a train of 17 cars standing just where the engineer shut off steam when the financial trouble burst and he and the crew left their work. The soil was soft and spongy, and the weight of the locomotive and cars had borne so heavily on the track that the train had sunk a yard deep in the ooze.

In the mud and made ground about the harbor at Colon were tons upon tons of costly machinery which had been dumped into the sea without even having been taken from the cases. Engines, with wrong gauges, imported from Belgium at enormous expense, were disposed of in this way. An outer wall to break the dash of the waves was made of gigantic blocks of concrete all numbered and shaped for their places in the wall which was to protect the canal from the sudden rises of the Chagres river. These blocks were made in France and taken across the Atlantic by the shipload, only to be dropped into the ocean.

### Bribery and Corruption Too.

Such, in mere outline and suggestion, is the story of the wanton extravagance and recklessness which marked the history of the first Panama company, and this was the prelude to the wholesale bribery and corruption which in the early nineties shook the Republic of France to its very foundation.

But in spite of failures and disaster,

the work of digging this canal, which some day will shorten the voyage from New York to San Francisco (for example) by more than 8,000 miles, was proceeded with.

As recently as 1900 it was estimated that it would take \$200,000,000 still to complete the work (only \$4,000,000 less than De Lesseps' estimate of nearly 20 years earlier); and now that the United States has undertaken to finish the canal they will consider themselves fortunate if the estimate of six years ago is not far exceeded. From beginning to end this great undertaking will have cost little less than \$500,000,000, of which considerably more than half will have been wasted.

## THE GARTER.

Insignia of the Most Coveted of All English Orders.

Although the most coveted of English orders, the origin of the Garter is only a mystery.

Conflicting authorities assign the foundation of the order either to the 2nd of April, St. George's day, 1344, or to the same festival five years later, while the popular anecdote associated with it is that at a court ceremony a lady—either the queen, the Countess of Salisbury or the Countess of Kent—happened to drop her garter, which was picked up by King Edward III, who, observing a disposition to laugh among the bystanders, exclaimed in his royal displeasure, "Honi soit qui mal y pense!" (disgraced be he who thinks ill of it).

The reigning monarch is, of course, ex officio the sovereign of the Order of the Garter.

At first the garter was made of light blue silk, but that which is now given is made of dark blue velvet. It is worn on the left leg a little below the knee.

The Order of the Garter as an order of chivalry has a very deep religious significance. It is, or should be, attended by religious ceremonies of a very precise and ornate character, and it was reported in Victoria's reign that a certain nobleman hesitated as to accepting the honor on account of its having been conferred on an oriental potentate—Philadelphia North American.

## CAME TO STAY.

Return of the Prodigal With Money and a Large Check.

Old home week had come, and the returned sons and grandsons were gathered together. One after another they rose and told with pardonable pride their achievements in the great world, impressing their importance on the stay at home. At length Mr. Jameson spoke:

"I went away from here twenty years ago a poor young man, with only one solitary dollar in my pocket. I walked the four miles from my father's farm to the station, and there I begged a ride to Boston on a freight car. Last night I drove into town behind a spirited pair of horses, and my purse—guess how much my purse holds in money today, besides a large check," and Mr. Jameson looked about him with a smile.

"Fifty dollars!"

"Seventy-five!"

"A hundred!" shouted the boys, filled with admiration.

"No," said Mr. Jameson, drawing a large fat purse from his pocket when the clamor had subsided, "none of you has guessed right. When I had paid the 25 cents to Ozy Boggs for my refreshing drive in the coach I had, besides my trunk check (which I retained for financial reasons), exactly 4 cents. I have come back, my friends, to stay. Any little jobs of sawing and splitting will be gratefully received."—Woman's Home Companion.

### Our Names Lack "Color."

At an early period, and indeed well toward the beginning of modern history, proper names told something as to paternity, occupation and habitation. Today they are quite colorless. A new Ulysses would no longer be Laertes. No Peter indicates that he is the son of Paul. A Carpenter or a Weaver is likely to be a lily fingered stockbroker. Even the place names, complains the Nation, have pretty much disappeared, except in the case of nobility, and since the average gentleman has not for years lived on his titular estates or perhaps has had none at all our new Gastons de Foix give us a name as splashy as John Jones.—London Chronicle.

### A Knockdown Argument.

A suburban school just opening for the season was composed of both city and country children. The teacher selected eight boys to debate the subject "Which is Preferable, Country or City Life?"

After they had read many arguments with much enthusiasm Country Hugh laid down his paper and said: "Mr. President, they don't know what they're talking about. The city boy knows nothing about going to town, and that beats anything I know."—Ladies' Home Journal.

### The Old Romans.

Do you know that the Roman mortar was harder than the stones which it held together? It is a remarkable thing that we do not know how to make mortar like that now. And what an eye those old Romans had for position! It is a pity that some historical writer doesn't write a romance with Julius Caesar as the central figure. Shakespeare seems to be the only author who has done anything of that sort really well.—London Captain.

## Jogging His Memory

Mr. and Mrs. Jastrum were seated at the breakfast table, Mr. Jastrum scanning the morning paper, especially the copper market, in which he was much interested.

"My dear," said Mrs. Jastrum, "I do wish that I could rely on you to attend to such household matters as require your attention."

"My dear," replied Mr. Jastrum sharply, lowering the paper, "if you will name any especial matter requiring my attention instead of blaming me beforehand I shall be happy to oblige you!"

"Very well. I wish you to post a letter for me on your way downtown."

"Do you call that a household matter? I supposed you referred to a leak in the roof or some plumbing or gas repairs. Indeed, you have made as much fuss about it as if you did. If it's only a letter you want posted I should suppose you might have dispensed with your strictures."

"That's all I wish this morning," replied Mrs. Jastrum in an injured tone.

Just before Mr. Jastrum departed his wife slipped a letter in the right hand pocket of his overcoat. He kissed her perfunctorily and went away, intending when out of sight to carry the letter in his hand that he might not forget it, but he had no sooner turned the corner than he met Hickson. Hickson asked him if he had noticed the fall in the price of copper. Jastrum said that he had, whereupon Hickson said that it was sure to go lower. Jastrum hurried away to his broker's office and gave him an order to sell out his holdings in copper at once. Then he went to his own office and hung up his overcoat, with the letter in it.

At 6 in the evening Mr. Jastrum opened the front door of his house and was greeted with the smell of gas.

"Phew! My dear Betsy, hello! Where are you?"

"Up here, dear!"

Mr. Jastrum went upstairs and found his wife sitting in her bedroom in her fur cloak, with the windows open.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed, taking in the situation. "When did the leak occur?"

"I noticed a faint smell of gas this morning as soon as I got up, but it was in the cellar and not very strong in the house. I kept the cellar door shut, but by noon the house was full of it."

"And why, may I ask, didn't you tell me so, that I could have notified the plumber?"

"When the leak in the water pipe occurred I asked you to stop at the plumber's and send him right around. You forgot it, and the house was flooded, spoiling both the dining room and parlor carpets, besides the ceilings of both rooms."

"And out of revenge, to show you!"

"Not at all. Finding I could not trust to your memory all the way to the gas office, I concluded to subject it to a much less strain. Both the post and gas offices are very near yours—the postoffice across the street, the gas office on the same block. I wrote you a note asking you to go to the gas office and tell them to send a man here at once."

"And mailed the letter this morning?"

"Yes. There is a mail box, as you know, just around the corner. The postman takes up the mail at 9 a. m. My letter was dropped in the box not two minutes after you left the house this morning and should have been handed you on the 11 o'clock delivery. Didn't you get it?"

"Get it? No. Doubtless you thought you put it in, but forgot it. You're always grumbling about my forgetting to post your letters, while you are the real delinquent. Nobody knows how many times you have claimed to have given me letters to post that you have intended to post yourself and have forgotten."

"Did you post the one I gave you this morning?"

Jastrum looked dazed for a moment, then frightened. He thrust his hand in his overcoat pocket and drew forth the letter.

"I met Hickson—just after—I left you," he stammered guiltily, "and he—"

"Look at the address."

He did as she asked and saw that the letter was addressed to himself.

"Read it."

He tore off the cover and read: "The gas is seeping in the cellar. Send a man at once."

Jastrum stood looking at the letter long enough to have read two pages.

"Isn't it plain?" asked his wife.

Without replying, he rushed down stairs and out, slamming the door behind him, intending to get a man to do what he didn't know how to do himself—turn off the gas. His next door neighbor came in with a monkey wrench and did the trick. Jastrum then went upstairs. His wife stood laughing at him.

"My dear," he said, not in reproach, but giving the word its real meaning. "It's a horse on me. Wait with dinner a few minutes while I go out and telephone for seats at the theater. After the play we'll sup at the Arlington with a bottle of your favorite beverage—champagne."

"Certainly, dear. Don't hurry. There's plenty of time."

That night Mr. and Mrs. Jastrum went to bed by lamplight. The next morning the gas leak was fixed, and after that Mr. Jastrum made memoranda of what he should do downtown. But unfortunately he usually forgot to consult his memoranda.

BERTHA D. HURLEY.

## Rings Round Eyes

J-10-



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### When Beauty Draws the Eye.

"I reckon we men are all a good deal alike, after all," volunteered a professional man who has a family in the outskirts and an office downtown, "though that may not be much of a compliment to any of us."

"This is a good deal in the nature of a confession, but here goes: 'I was getting ready to cross Olive street at the post office this morning when I noticed what I thought a remarkably handsome young woman going across the corner at Eighth street."

In the language of George Ade, she certainly was easy to look at. I looked. She was none of your 'pretty little things.' She was fine of face, and her hair was just that shade of blonde that isn't exactly red, nor any other color for more than half a second at a time, and there wasn't a thread of it that wasn't exactly where it ought to be. She had clothes, too, and knew what to do with them."

"Well, as I said before, I looked. Then I kept on looking. Her walk was leisurely and she had a carriage that any automobile press agent on earth would give his diamond for an adequate description of to put in a pamphlet."

"Suddenly I discovered that I had stopped and was rubbing with all the reach I had—and that's a good deal in a case of that kind. Maybe you won't believe it, knowing me as you do; but the discovery rattled me. I wondered how many persons were looking at me and trying to catalogue the sorts of things I was."

"So I pronounced what the magazine writers pronounce a 'furtive look around.'"

"There were just eleven men and one boy in sight. Three of them may have been drummers, one was middle-aged and harbored pork tenderloin whiskers and may have been a sky pilot; one was an old negro; another looked like a shoe clerk with the Y. M. C. A. habit, and another was a news vendor."

"I haven't breath enough left to tell you what the others looked like, but do you imagine for one brief, fleeting moment they were being worried about what I was doing? Not much. Every blamed one of 'em was gazing as spellbound as he could be after that retreating radiance of feminine glory."

"But I was the champion of the bunch I was thickest to come to."—New Orleans States.

### THE LOOM OF LOVE.

All day in the beautiful valleys of light,  
All night in the crystalline dreams of the night;  
All life in the sweep and the sweet of its song.  
The loom of God's beautiful love rolls along!

All day it is ringing and swinging its thread  
Through a heart that I know, and the curls of her head;  
All night in the mystical regions of sleep  
Around us its dreams and its mysteries creep!

It weaves me a pattern wherein her fair face  
Is twined with the lilies and roses of grace;  
And here where I toll in the ring of the mart  
It goes winding and winding me home to her heart!

—Baltimore Sun.

The ills peculiar to women, take different forms.

Some ladies suffer, every month, from dark rings round their eyes, blotches on their skin and tired feeling. Others suffer agonies of pain, that words can hardly express.

Whatever the symptoms, remember there is one medicine that will go beyond mere symptoms, and act on the cause of their troubles, the weakened womanly organs.

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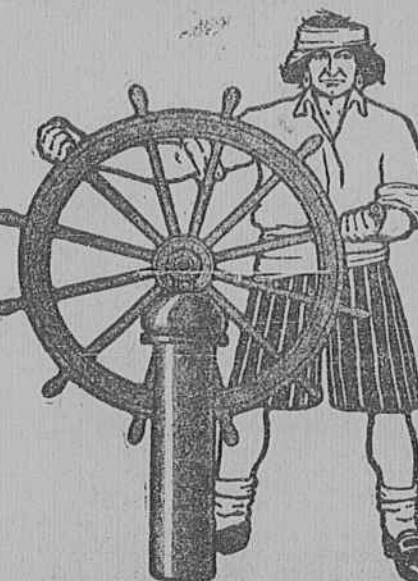
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